

Session 1: Best Practices Panel 1

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CERPP CONFERENCE 2022:

**Best Practices
in Test-Optional Admissions**

February 8 - 9

Test-Optional – Then... and Now

1969

Bowdoin College is first test optional school

Dean Richard Moll was a visionary on issues of access – making
Bowdoin test optional followed by co-founding the Common Application

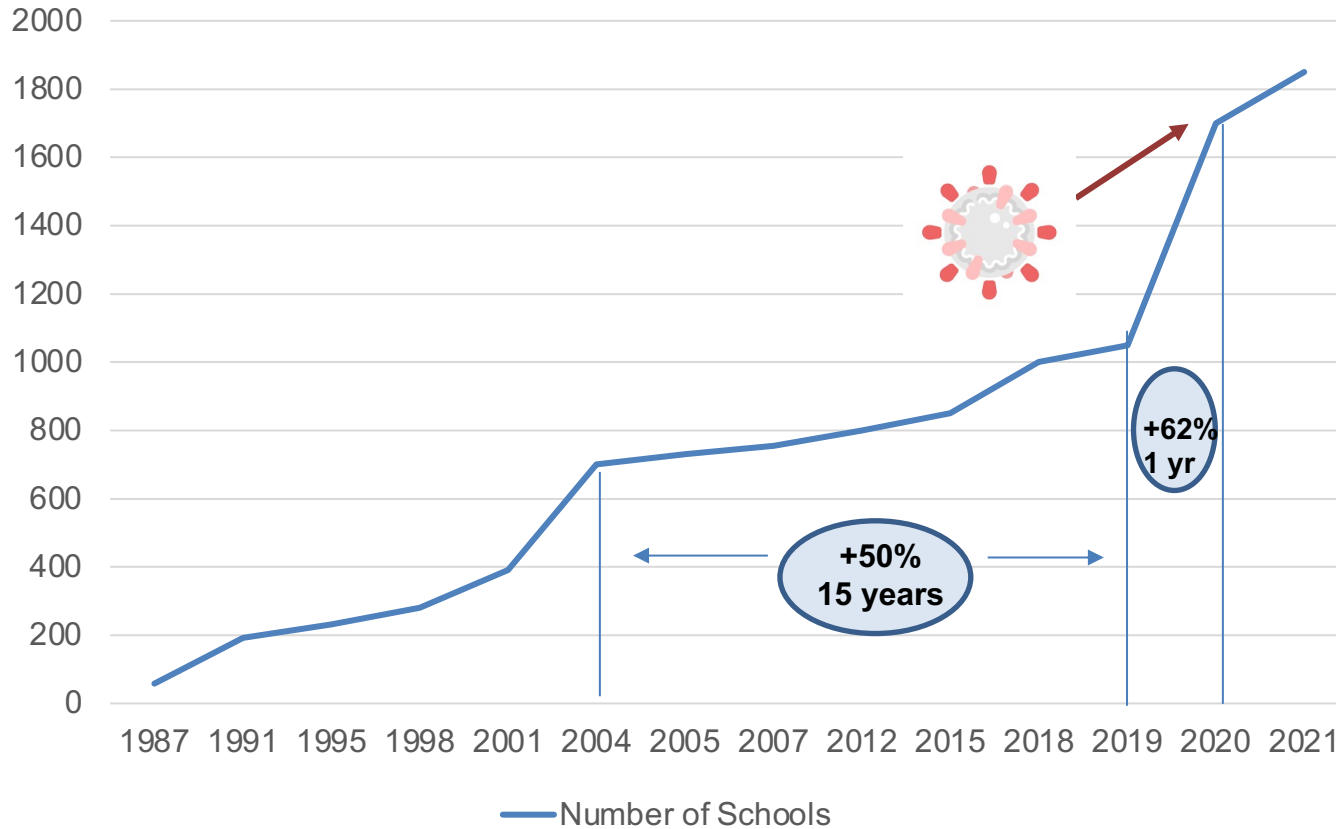
1984

Bates College is the second test optional school

2021

More than 1800 schools are test-optional

Growth in Test-Optional Practices



Reasons for Test-Optional

- **Principles**
 - Access ⇒ reducing requirement barriers
 - Equity ⇒ de-emphasizing component correlated with wealth/income
- **Business**
 - Increased exposure ⇒ applications ⇒ enrollment
- **Competition**
 - Actual / Aspirational peer group alignment

Preparation Pre-Pandemic

- **Environment:**
 - (mostly) stable
 - testing administered on schedule in familiar format
 - timeline to test-optional established by school
- **Planning:**
 - establish research questions
 - complete internal testing
 - prepare/complete training for application review and selection
- **Review:**
 - planned data gathering during selection and at enrollment
 - potential research questions to establish baselines and adaptations

Preparation In-Pandemic

- **Environment:**
 - *UNSTABLE*
 - testing administrations canceled and limited seating available for operating administrations
 - health danger for in person testing options
- ~~Planning~~
- **Reacting:**
 - limited or no time to decision about test optional
 - limited opportunity to plan method/training
 - test-optional commitments often made as temporary/pilot/pandemic responsive rather than as policy
- **Review:**
 - research data has test submission status intermingled with pandemic influences on student academic and personal preparation and adaptation to college environment

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INTERNATIONAL

ACAC

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING

NACAC

National Association for
College Admission Counseling



Fall 2021 Freshman Admission

Admitted Student Profile

Applications	139,490
Admits	15,028
Admit Rate	11%
Enrolled	6,586

Academic Characteristics (Domestic Admits)

Average Weighted GPA	4.54
SAT Composite	N/A
AP/IB/Honors Courses (HS)	26
A-G Courses	57

Domestic Admits

Underrepresented	28%
Low Income (\leq \$58,004)	22%
First Generation College	22%
ELC (Top 9%) – CA Res Only	82%

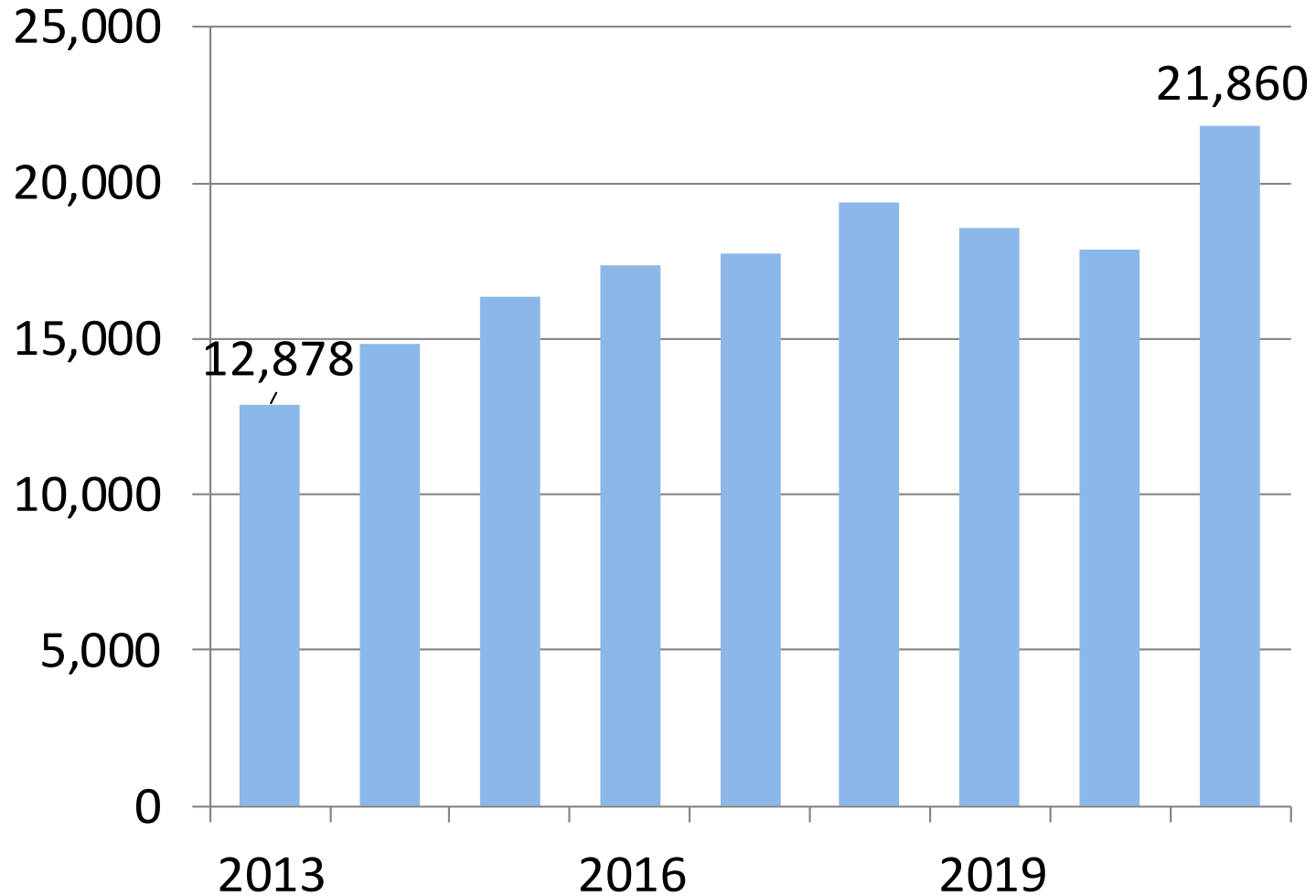
CA Residents

	2019	2020	2021
Admits	8,354	9,202	8,431
Enrolled	4,433	4,787	4,546

Non-residents

	2019	2020	2021
Admits	5,366	6,400	6,597
Enrolled	1,487	1,600	2,040

UCLA International Applications



International Enrolled History

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Application Increase	15%	10%	6%	2%	9%	-4%	-4%	22%
Acceptance Rate	17%	14%	14%	13%	11%	8%	9%	9%
Yield	28%	28%	30%	29%	29%	35%	29%	35%

Top Countries: Enrolled Citizens

1	China
2	India
3	Canada
4	South Korea
5	Saudi Arabia

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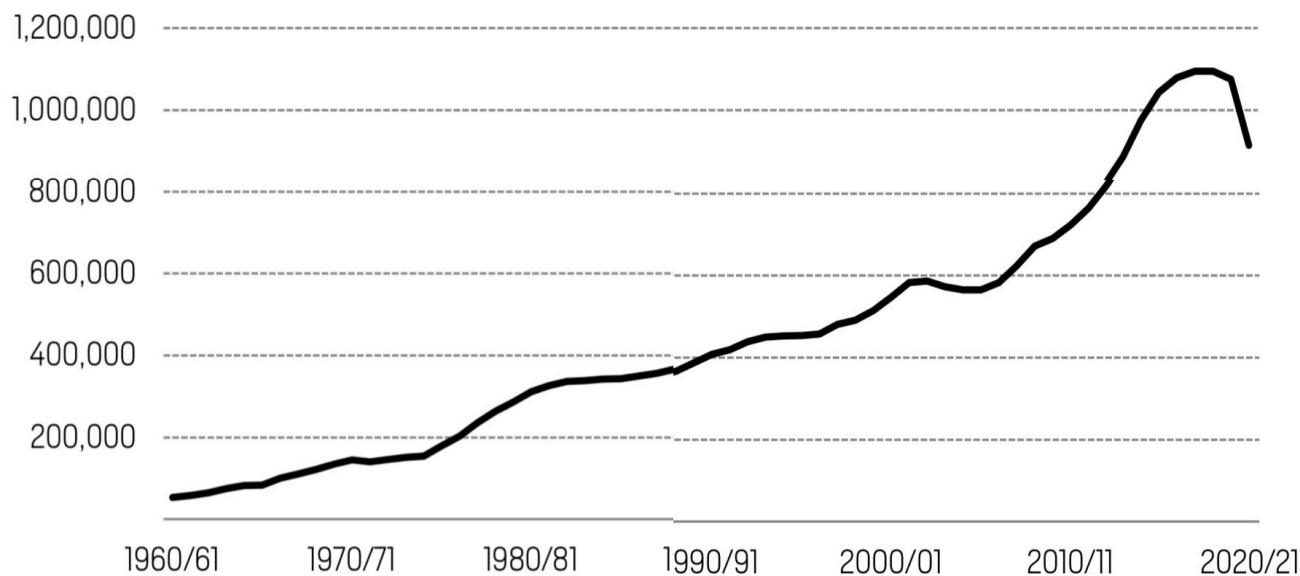
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Recent History

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRENDS

In 2020/21, the total number of international students at U.S. universities declined by 15% to 914,095 students.



<https://opendoorsdata.org/fast-facts/fast-facts-2021/>



**National Association for
College Admission Counseling**

Guiding the way to higher education

Report of the Commission on the Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Admission

September 2008

National Association for College Admission Counseling

NACAC Testing Commission Report, September 2008

Commission Recommendation: Consider the Predictive Value of Achievement Tests

There are tests that, at many institutions, are both predictive of first-year and overall grades in college and more closely linked to the high school curriculum, including the College Board's AP exams and Subject Tests as well as the International Baccalaureate examinations. What these tests have in common is that they are—to a much greater extent than the SAT and ACT—achievement tests, which measure content covered in high school courses; that there is currently very little expensive private test preparation associated with them, partly because high school class curricula are meant to prepare students for them; and that they are much less widely required by colleges than are the SAT and ACT. Seventy-two percent of colleges require either the SAT or ACT as a requirement for admission; only two percent require the College Board's Subject Tests.

Not all test-optional institutions for U.S. students are test-optional for international applicants, and vice versa

Schools that are test-optional for domestic applicants, but require tests for international applicants:

- Brandeis University
 - *“Except for US/Canadian citizens and permanent residents, international applicants must submit either the SAT or ACT test with the writing section.”*
- Smith College
- Bryn Mawr College
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- University of Puget Sound
- Virginia Commonwealth Univ.
- Skidmore College
- Franklin & Marshall University

Schools that are test-optional for international applicants, but require tests for domestic applicants:

- Purdue University
- University of Iowa
- University of Washington
- University of Delaware
 - *Also optional for in-state, but require for U.S.-based out-of-state applicants*
 - *All applicants must submit on enrollment*
- California State University: Northridge
- University of San Francisco
- University of Minnesota: Twin Cities
- SUNY University at Binghamton
- Oregon State University
- Saint Louis University
- Hawaii Pacific University
- Michigan State University
- Northeastern University
 - *“highly recommends”*

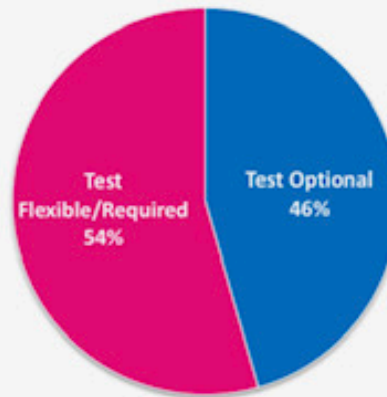


Among the top 500 4-yr institutions that enroll the most international undergraduates, the majority require standardized tests of int'l applicants

Test Policies for International Applicants among the Top 500 Selective 4-yr Institutions with the Most International UG Students

Top 500 accounts for ~90% of all international undergraduate students at 4-yr institutions

- University of Pennsylvania
- Drexel University
- University of California: Los Angeles
- Boston University
- Cornell University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Emory University
- Brandeis University
- Indiana University Bloomington
- Franklin & Marshall College



- Wake Forest University
- University of Arizona
- Fort Hays State University
- George Washington University
- University of Iowa
- Florida Institute of Technology
- Mount Holyoke College
- Bard College
- Bowdoin College



NOTE: The 500 represent the those within in the base list of 1,438 selective, 4-yr institutions. Total percentage does not sum to 100 due to rounding. "Selective" institutions: Excludes For Profit, Special Focus & Tribal, Two-year, and Open Admission institutions in the U.S. SOURCE: College Board internal analysis of the Annual Survey of Colleges, 2015; data retrieved by Data Science, and FairTest list.



What factors we considered (2012)

Context matters

- History of sending students to US/type of school
- Is there is a testing culture in the country/region?
- Regional variations of SAT and TOEFL
- Testing was a way to compare/contrast

English Ability

- Minimum English Eligibility
- TOEFL, IELTS and Subscores

Context is critical when evaluating applicants across various int'l regions

Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing Score Band	East Asia & The Pacific	Americas	Europe & Eurasia	South & Central Asia	Middle East & North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
2250-2400	6%	2%	2%	3%	0%	0%
2100-2240	14%	5%	6%	9%	1%	2%
1950-2090	19%	8%	12%	15%	3%	7%
1800-1940	19%	12%	17%	18%	6%	14%
1650-1790	15%	15%	18%	18%	10%	18%
1500-1640	11%	18%	17%	16%	14%	20%
1350-1490	8%	17%	13%	10%	16%	18%
1200-1340	5%	13%	9%	6%	15%	13%
1050-1190	2%	7%	4%	3%	11%	6%
900-1040	1%	2%	2%	2%	11%	2%
750-890	0%	1%	0%	0%	10%	1%
600-740	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%



The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness



🕒 This article is more than **1 year old**

Answer Sheet

An account of exactly how students cheated on SAT in Asia



By Valerie Strauss

October 30, 2014

8:57

LTE



A

The Atlantic

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EDUCATION

How Sophisticated Test Scams From China Are Making Their Way Into the U.S.

Chinese students hire imposter “gunmen” to take the SAT, the GRE and other tests.

By Peg Tyre



MARCH 21, 2016

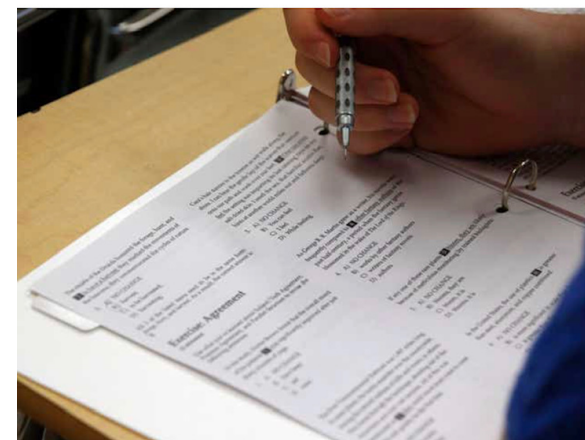


USA TODAY

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Reports of leaked SAT leave students wondering about integrity of test



A student takes on questions during a college test preparation class.

ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

DAVID JESSE AND KATE MURPHY | DETROIT FREE PRESS | 5:17 pm EDT August 28, 2018

We don't know what we don't know!



What factors we considered (2015)

Context still matters

- Regional variations of testing
 - Average GPA and test score for top countries
 - Mean TOEFL
 - Different curriculum
- Treat SAT/ACT more like with domestic applicants
- AP Exams if in different curriculum
- Trust but Verify
 - SAT/ACT vs. TOEFL/IELTS
 - Scores vs. application writing
 - Option of additional DET scores
 - Internal results vs. predicted scores



National Association for
College Admission Counseling

Statement Revisiting Recommendations to Testing Organizations in 2016

<https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/newsroom/statement-for-testing-agencies.may23.pdf>



National Association for
College Admission Counseling

1050 N Highland Street, Suite 400 | Arlington, VA 22201 | 800.822.6285 | nacacnet.org

NACAC and International ACAC Urge Testing Flexibility for International Applicants for Class of 2018

https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/newsroom/nacac_intlacac_testingguidance_101117.pdf

Inside US	August, October, November, December, March, May, and June	7 testing dates
Outside US	October, December, March, and May	4 testing dates

**ENSURING ALL STUDENTS HAVE
ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE ROLE OF STANDARDIZED
TESTING IN THE TIME OF COVID-19
AND BEYOND**
GUIDANCE FOR COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

NACAC Task Force
on Standardized Admission
Testing for International
and US Students

NACAC

Highlighted International Inequities

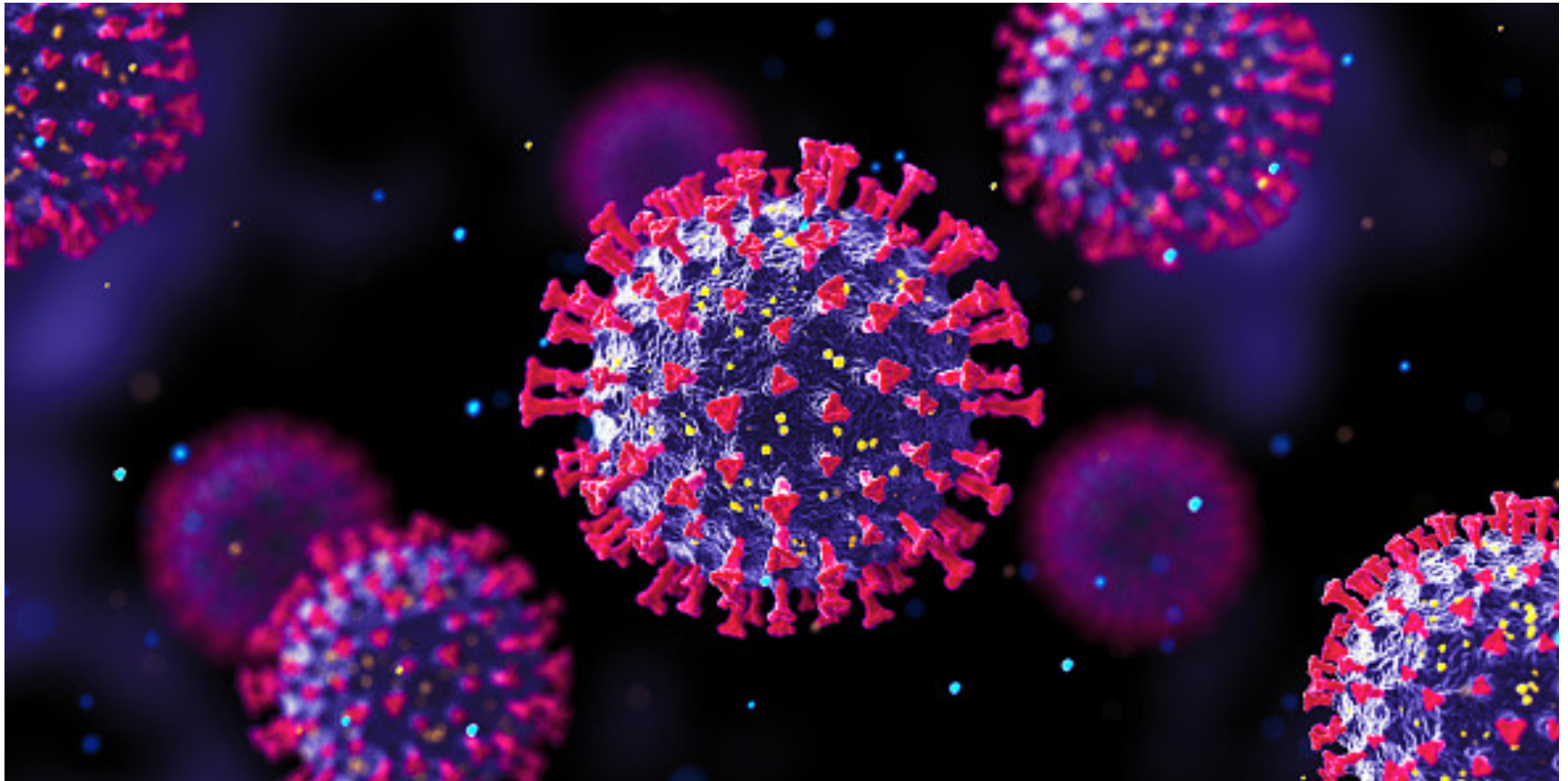
- Mass test score cancellations
- Fee waivers for low-income families are available in the US, but not outside of the US
- Tests that are meant to be standard are administered differently outside the US
- International students who require customer service face greater obstacles

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

News > Press Room >
University of California Board of Regents unanimously approved changes to standardized testing requirement for undergraduates

Press Room

University of California Board of Regents unanimously approved changes to standardized testing requirement for undergraduates

UC Office of the President
Thursday, May 21, 2020

Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA

UC slams the door on standardized admissions tests, nixing any SAT alternative



Access Youth Center students working on SAT test prep. (Courtesy)

BY TERESA WATANABE | STAFF WRITER
NOV. 18, 2021 7:52 PM PT

What factors we consider now

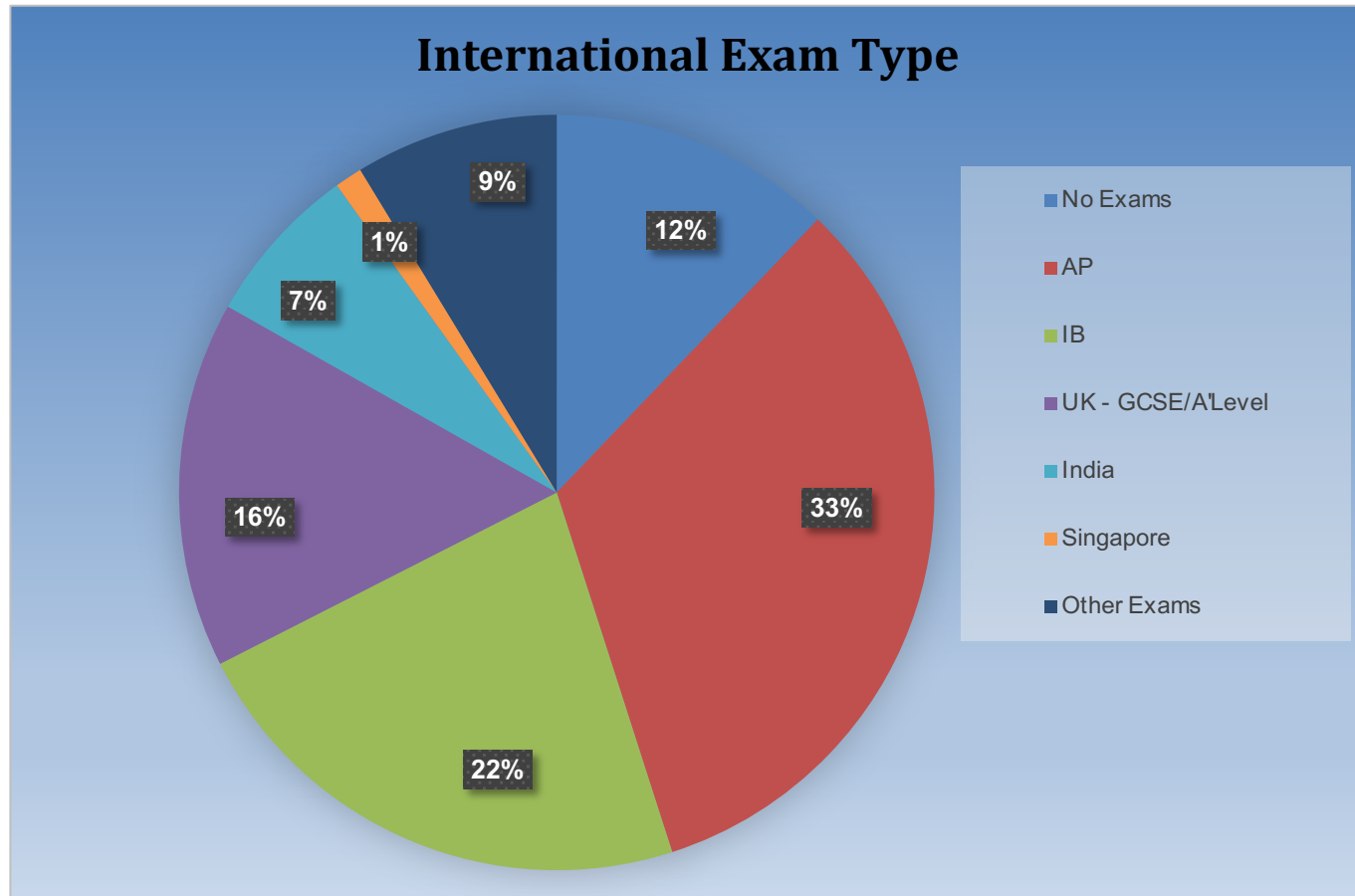


SAME THINGS!!!

Context, Context, Context

- External exams
- School information

English ability



2021 International Applicants from Non-US High Schools Only

N=16,946

When do is it harder without testing?



- No external exams
- Switched systems
- COVID “exams”
- English ability?

What's Next?



2022 Informal Survey

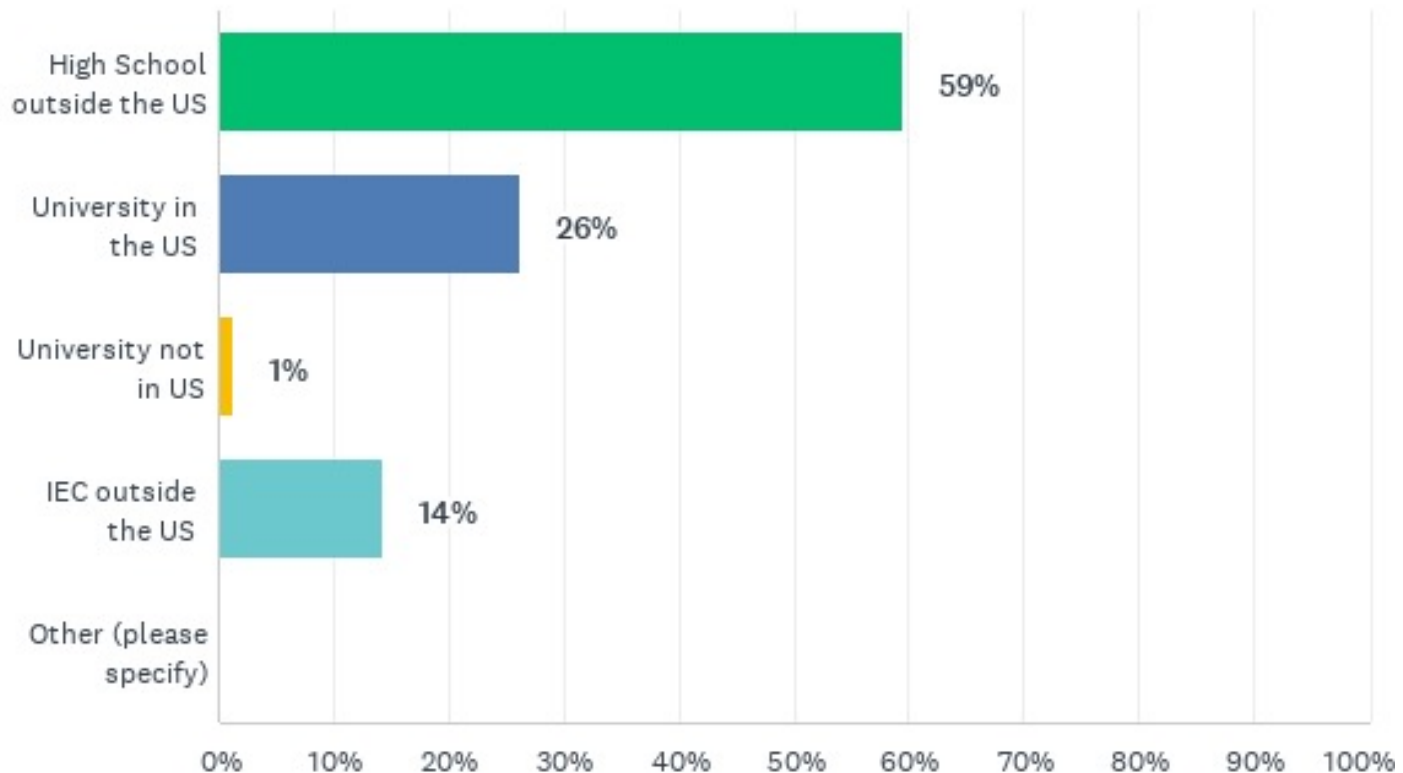
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International Testing Survey

Monday, January 31, 2022

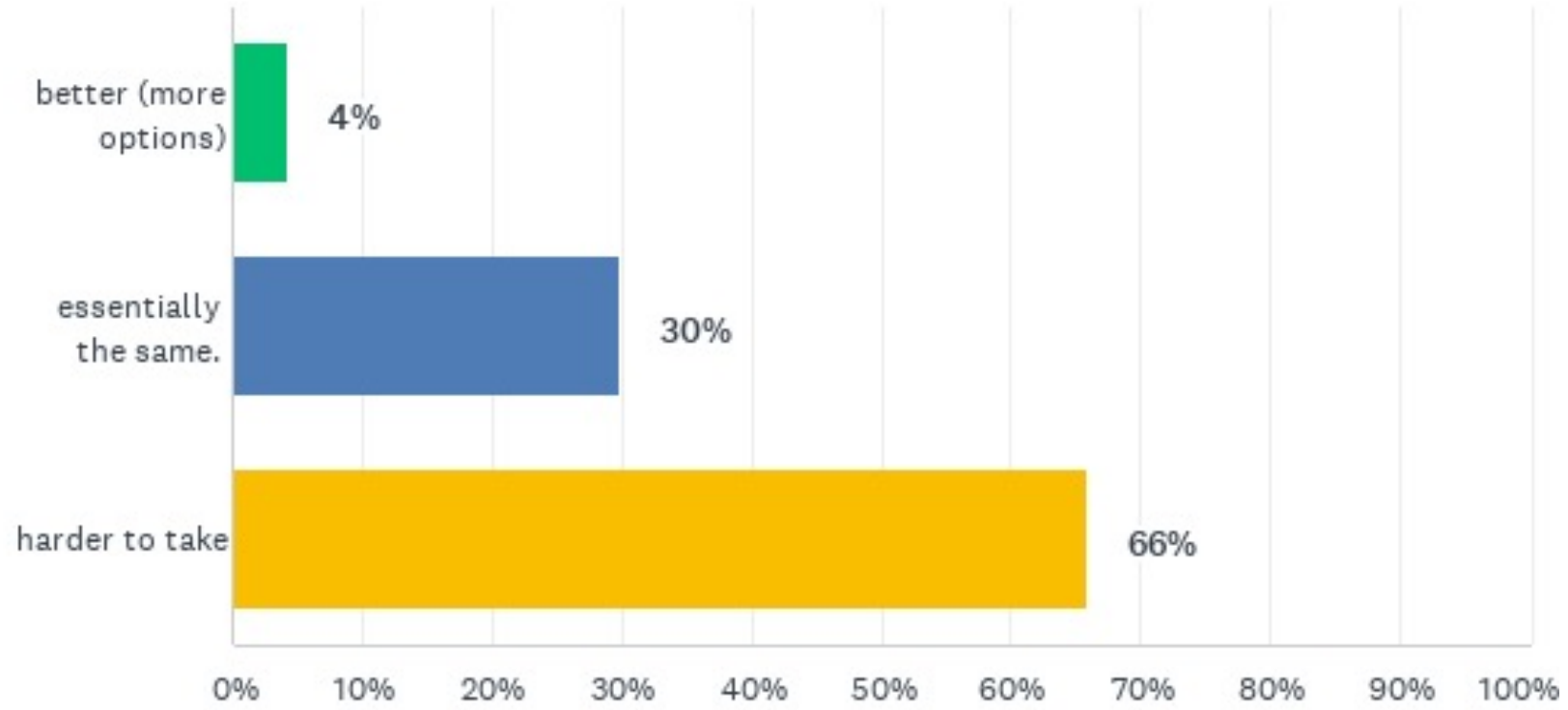
Q1: I work in a

Answered: 217



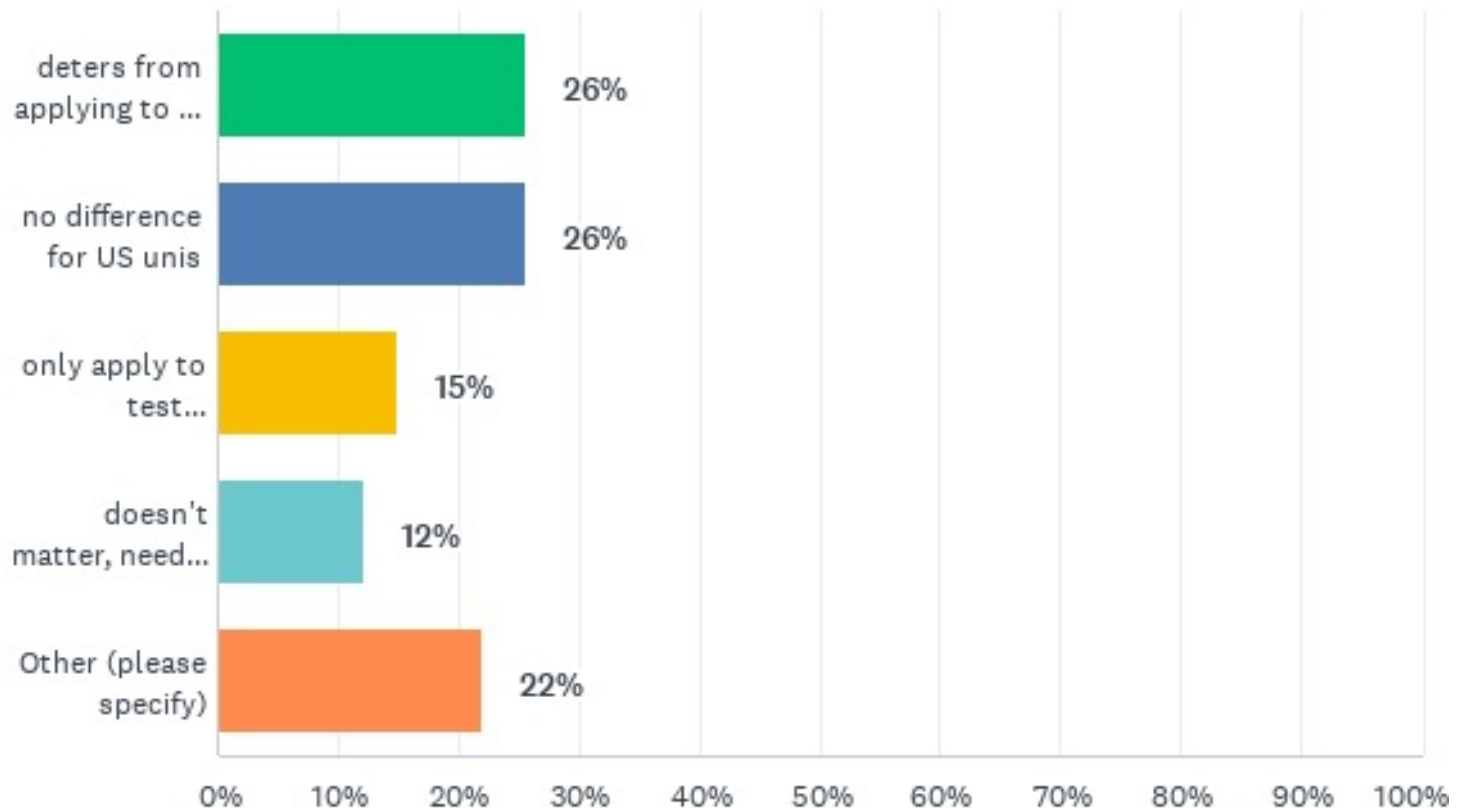
Q2: Since the start of COVID/2020, the environment for students to take the SAT/ACT is

Answered: 141



Q3: How do your students/families feel about the SAT/ACT?

Answered: 141

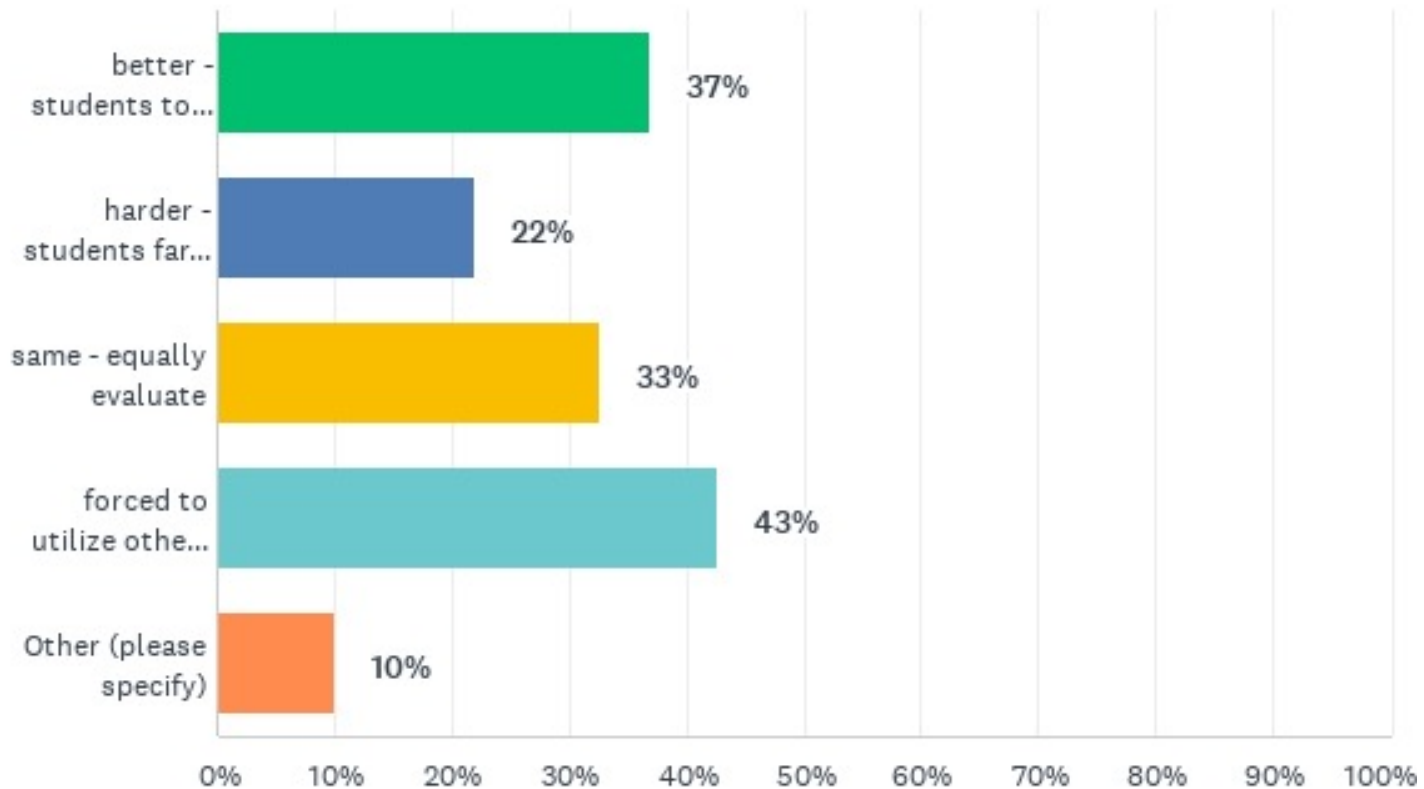


Responses – on the ground

- Students and families strongly believe that the SAT is a ticket to U.S. universities and that their chances of getting into competitive U.S. colleges fall significantly without test scores.
- There's intense pressure to find a test centre. Families will travel for hours to another city to find a test centre that can accommodate them.
- In mainland China, for Chinese nationals, the SAT creates significant challenges. First, because Chinese nationals can't take the SAT within mainland China, it forces those keen to take it to leave and take in Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, or another site. This creates significant financial hardships for students families. Second, when the SAT was more commonly required, it helped stifle students extracurricular engagements bc of pressure to spend precious spare time on SAT.
- Our number of students taking the SAT and ACT has dropped to about half. Students who knows they will score very high will take it and those looking at selective schools. Those who aren't keen on taking tests will choose to opt out and take the test optional route.
- Testing is incredibly difficult to access and the dates do not work well with our school calendar. Students have many global options and many do not consider the US because of testing.
- Testing has been so very difficult these last years. Testing sites are limited (let alone testing dates being limited) and the seats fill up quickly as so many prior dates have been cancelled. These types of tests are literally foreign to my Australian educated students. It is a prohibitive barrier for some.

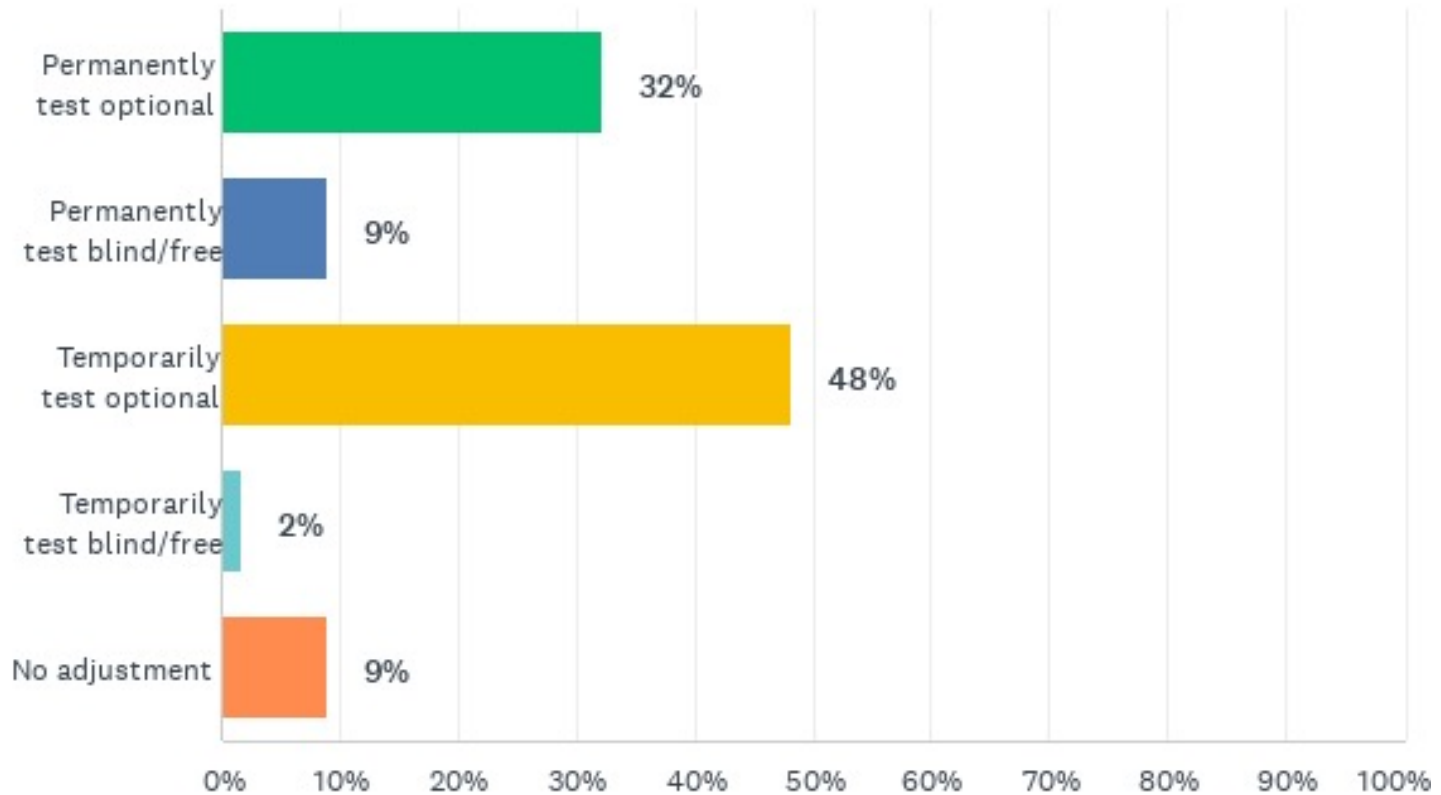
Q4: Do you think colleges/universities that have test flexible/optional and test blind/free are: (check all that apply)

Answered: 141



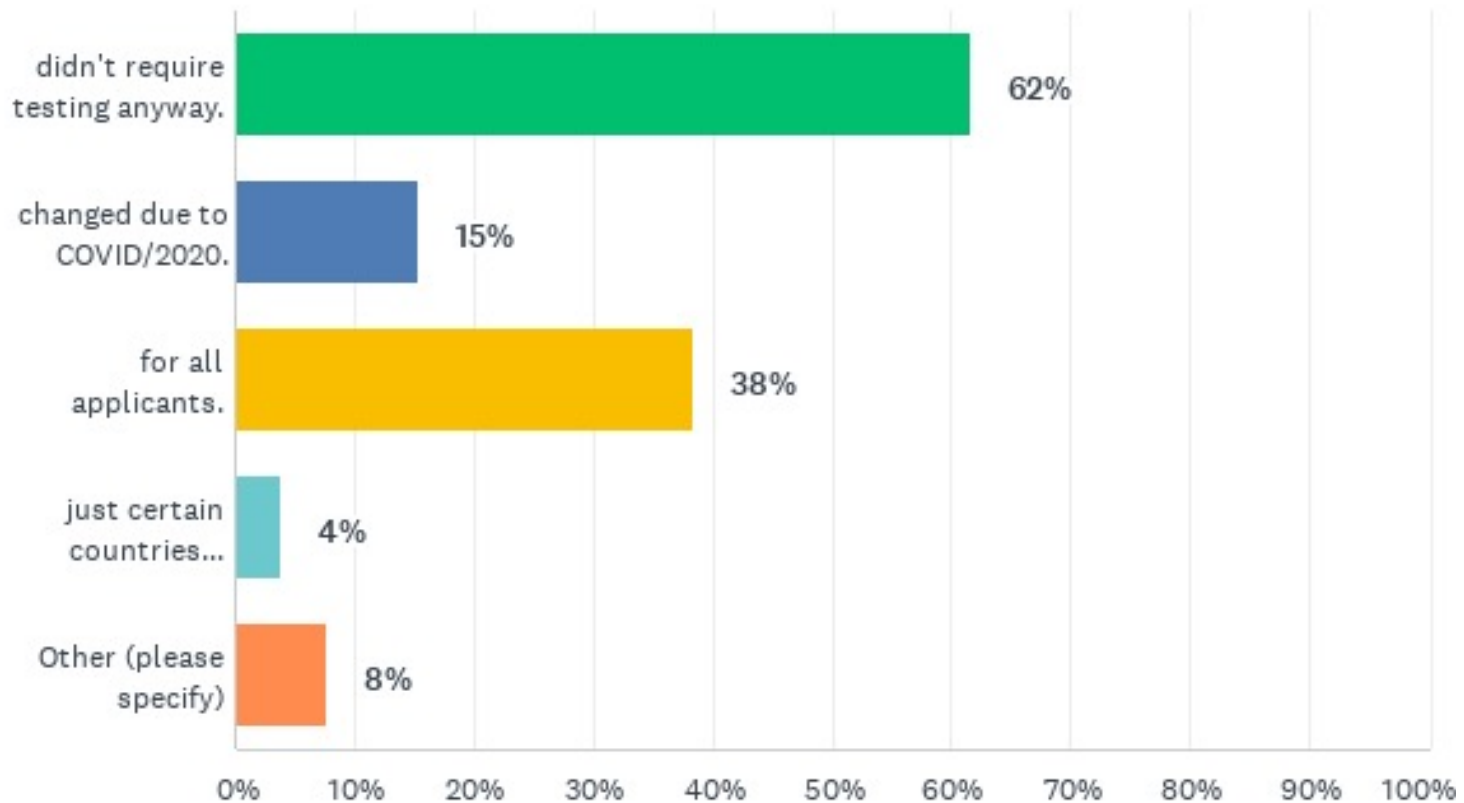
Q5: My college/university has

Answered: 56



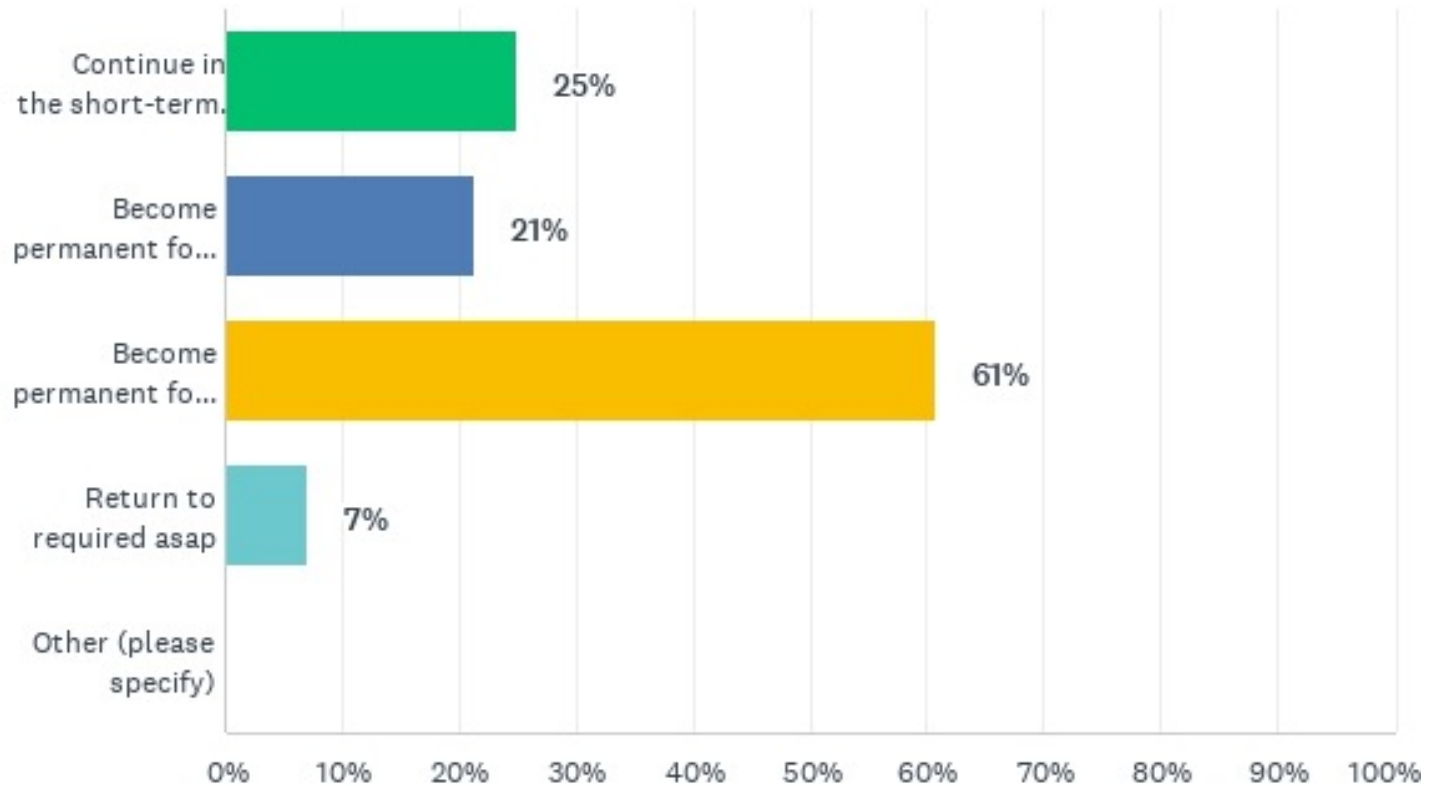
Q6: If the testing decision is permanent, the decision was made: (check all that apply)

Answered: 26



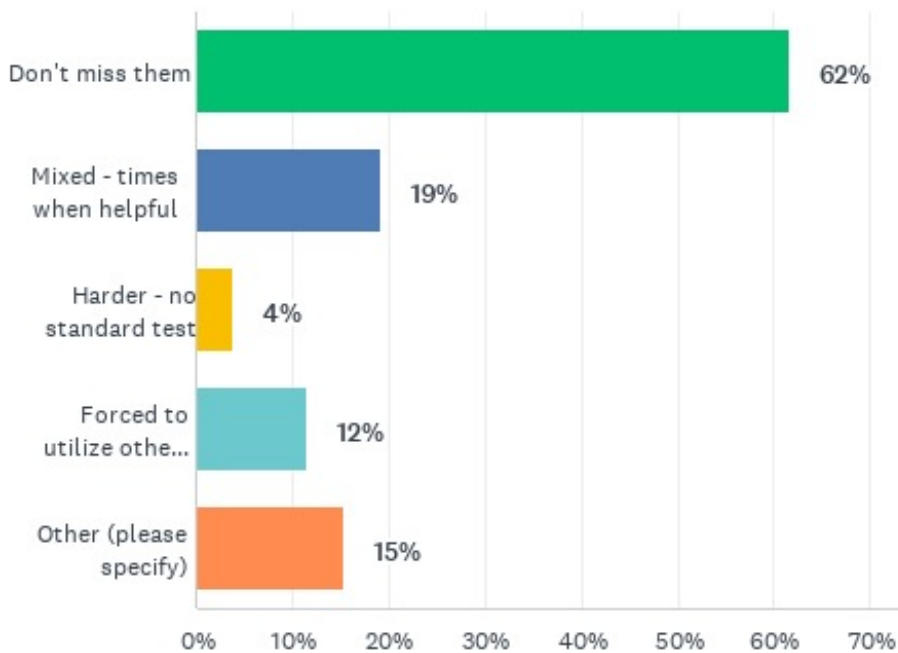
Q7: If the testing decision is temporary, I suspect : (Check all that apply)

Answered: 28

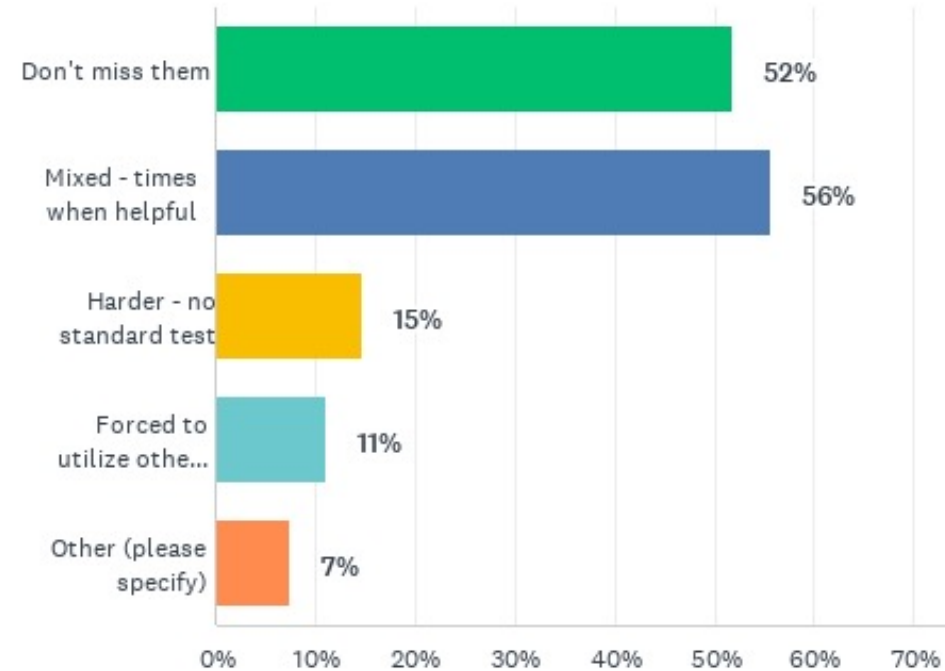


Q8: How do you find evaluating applications without testing? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 26 - **Permanent**



Answered: 27 - **Temporary**



Responses – family perceptions

- They feel that their children still need to take the SAT/ACT even when a uni says they are test optional because they don't believe them. They think if tests exist they must be needed.
- I would say that students and parents in Turkey do not believe that US universities are 'really' test optional. They continue to prepare for and stress over standardized tests despite what university admissions colleagues and counselors tell them :/
- Because fewer students are taking the SAT, families feel more pressure to take it as a way to stand out.
- Being test optional still puts pressure on student to do the SAT as they feel it might just give them an edge over someone who does not submit the scores.
- Many feel it is still necessary for highly selective admissions regardless of testing policy and the hardships of taking the test.
- For many Chinese students, they feel that test optional is not truly optional for Asian applicants. They also feel they must score higher than the average scores because of the number of Chinese applicants to compete with.
- Generally speaking, students are now pay more money on college preparation. Instead of test preparation, they're now focusing on decent activities, researches with famous professors, internships in well-known companies. p
- Move away from testing has increased pressure on our teachers for grade inflation and increased problems with greater distractions from academics and excessive help on essays and applications from outside school. I have also seen an increase in pay for grades and GPA from personal acquaintances at other schools.
- They trust schools that use the SAT as they feel this makes the school more objective and serious.

Responses – things for university

- Making the SAT optional is taxing on students. When it is optional, students prefer not to take the SAT however, feel pressure because their peers are/might be taking the SAT. Students don't believe that "SAT Optional" is truly optional. My vote is to either require the SAT or don't require it at all.
- More students are applying to us because of test optional movement. They love it!
- U.S. universities should use simple and clear language to explain their testing policy on their website - maybe even dumb it down. Students often do not believe that test-optional is truly 'optional' and they believe that not having scores will negatively impact their applications.
- It puts a significant additional burden on students and families, is rife with exploitation and sometimes blatant fraud. I wish all schools were test blind. Optional just causes confusion and leads students to believe they are disadvantaged without test scores
- Either go all in or all out. No testing at all or testing for everyone. It is putting too much stress on students to try to figure out if they need to test, if their scores are good enough when they do test, and how the scores will be used once they do/do not submit them. It does not help that the data do not support a truly holistic testing environment in schools that are test-optional rather than test-free.
- Reference to the middle 50% range is no longer valid as only the strong results are submitted. It is harder for counsellor to advise the academic fit.
- Universities need to have clearer policies and explain how they can review without tests. Universities should be more transparent about how test scores can help or hinder and application.

Final Thoughts?



Equity Framework



Strategic Alignment

Strategic Plan:

Expanding geographic reach and diversity (Priority 3);
demonstrating commitment to equity and inclusion (Priority 4);
and ensuring access and affordability (Priority 6)

Guiding Principles:

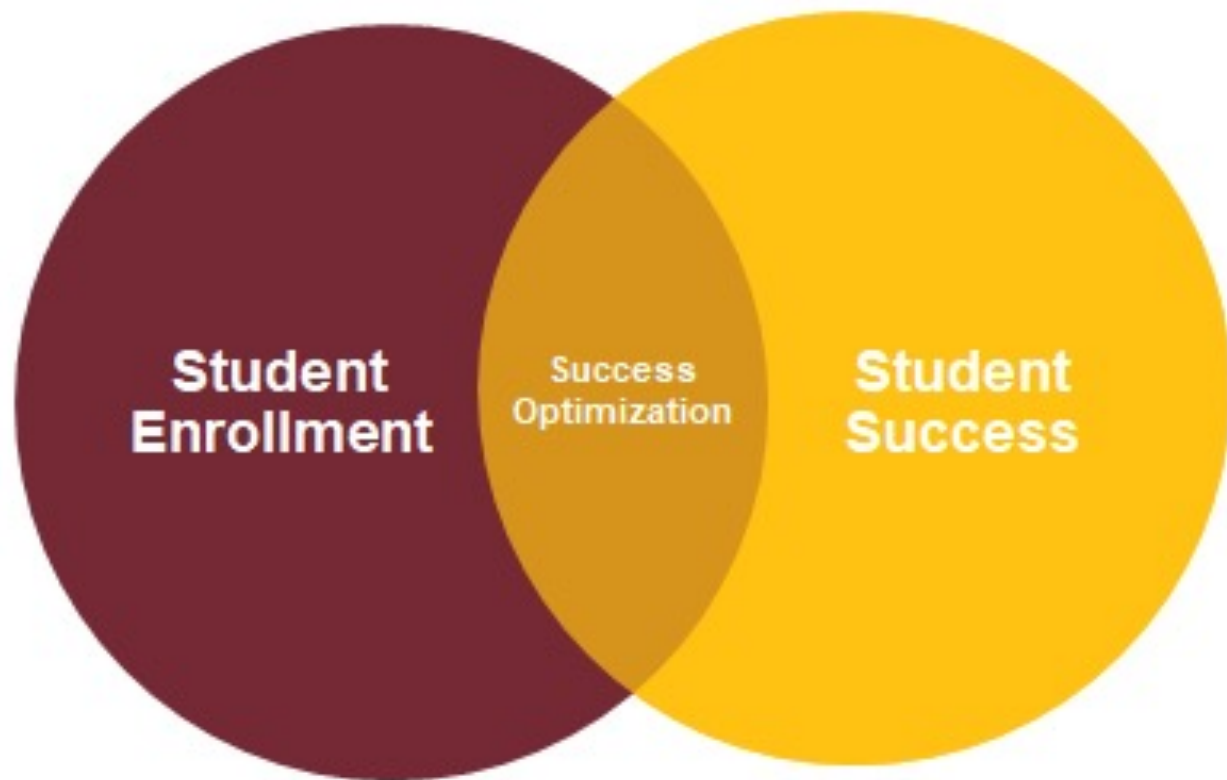
"We are an inclusive Catholic university that educates students – mind, body, and spirit – for meaningful lives, rewarding careers, ethical leadership and service to improve the human condition."

~ Bellarmine Mission

Timeline/Milestones

Timeframe	Milestones/Activity
Spring 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Planning process is underway (Jan 2018)
Fall 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President convened a committee of faculty and staff to explore test-optional admission policy to ensure an equitable process for potential students
Spring 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments of new Provost and VP for Academic Affairs as well as VP for Enrollment, Marketing and Communication (VPEMC) (April 2019) Test-optional study completed by committee (May 2019) Strategic Plan Approved by Board of Trustees (May 2019)
Fall 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VPEMC assumes the role of thoroughly vetting test-optional policy/process with appropriate stakeholders (faculty, academic leadership, senior leadership and board members)
Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize test-optional policy/process and develop communication plan (Jan 2020) Public announcement of Bellarmine adopting test-optional policy starting with students entering in Fall 2021 (Feb 2020) COVID-19 onset accelerates implementation of TOP for Fall 2020 entering cohort (Mar 2020)
Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three (3) incoming first-year students opt not to submit test scores (Aug 2020)

Success for All



Holistic Evaluation Rubric

- » Strength of Curriculum (school and applicant pool context)
- » Grades in Courses
- » Involvement/Engagement Outside of Classroom
- » Traditional/Non-Traditional Leadership
- » Recommendations
- » Mission/Strategic Plan Alignment

Original Scholarship Regimen

- » Winners = 18%
- » Same = 69%
- » Losers = 12%

Revised Scholarship Regimen

- » Winners = 24%
- » Same = 63%
- » Losers = 13%

Incoming Student Profile

Fall 2021	Fall 2020	Fall 2019
3.72 Median HS GPA	3.71 Median HS GPA	3.71 Median HS GPA
25% SOC	21% SOC	18% SOC
38% First-Gen	33% First-Gen	35% First-Gen
29% Pell Eligible	28% Pell Eligible	24% Pell Eligible

Fall 2021 Results

- » Following is the breakdown of test optional in the context of the admission funnel: 46% of submitted applications elected not to submit test scores (54% opted to submit test scores), throughout the remainder of the funnel 43% of admitted, deposited, and enrolled students opted not to submit test scores (57% opted to submit test scores at each stage of the funnel).
- » Fall 2021, Bellarmine had an incoming class of 593 students, 256 of which elected not to submit test scores. This accounted for 43% of the class. A considerable increase from the previous year (only 3 students), albeit below the national average of 57% from Common App research.
- » 45% of the test optional group were first generation; 33% students of color; average GPA of this group was 3.52; 65% were from Kentucky, 35% were from other states.

Fall 2021 Results

Original Test Submitters: 337	Persisted, Test Submitters: 316	Did Not Persist, Test Submitters: 21	Persisted, Non-Test Submitters: 230	Did Not Persist, Non-Test Submitters: 26
Original Non-Test Submitters: 256				
Incoming GPA	3.70	3.55	3.52	3.50
Fall GPA	3.32	2.26	2.87	1.85
Subgroup Retention/ Attrition Rate	94%	6%	90%	10%

FA21 Fall-to-Spring Return Rate: +2.2% FA20 and +1.7% FA19

Q & A

Please submit your question in the
Q & A section of the Zoom webinar.

OR

Add your questions on the [Ukova](#) platform
on the right side of your screen.

Transition to Breakouts

Thank you for an engaging Q&A session!

At this point, we will transition to
Breakouts

Please return to the [Ukova](#) agenda and
select the next session.

*Note: Please wait in the Zoom waiting room until the host starts the
session at the scheduled time.*